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ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE 6 (PART I)

LOS ANGELES TIMES
27 April 1982

McMahon CIA Nomination Receives Modest Praise in Senate

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Reagan will nominate John N. McMahon, a CIA veteran who helped run the U-2 spy plane program and later managed the agency's spy network, to succeed Adm. Bobby R. Inman as deputy CIA director, the White House announced Monday.

Deputy White House Press Secretary Larry Speakes said Reagan considers McMahon, who now holds the agency's No. 3 post of executive director, "to be a solid professional, a career public servant" who is "respected throughout the intelligence community."

Said to Lack Inman's Clout

Members of the Senate Intelligence Committee, which will hold confirmation hearings on McMahon, had modest praise for him, but both Democrats and Republicans said he did not have the stature and clout of Inman, who was very popular with the committee.

"We'll have to work harder on oversight and ask tougher questions, because McMahon is not Inman, and there are still problems about trusting the Administration in this area," Sen. David Durenberger (R-Minn.), a committee member, said.

Joined CIA After College

Inman, 51, announced Wednesday that he was leaving a 30-year career in the military and intelligence to enter private business. Both Durenberger and another committee member, Sen. Joseph R. Biden Jr. (D-Del.), had said they feared that Inman in fact was quitting the No. 2 CIA post because of disagreements over policies followed by CIA Director William J. Casey.

McMahon, 52, has served in virtually every phase of CIA operations since he was graduated from Holy Cross College in 1951 and joined the agency later that year. He was promoted to the No. 3 post in January.

A spokesman for committee Chairman Barry Goldwater (R-Ariz.) said the senator would have no comment on McMahon's nomination at this time. But three sources close to the committee said that Goldwater would have preferred a military officer who might have had more independence from Casey and more stature with other intelligence agencies.

A spokesman for Sen. Richard G. Lugar, (R-Ind.), who last week called Inman's resignation a traumatic occasion, said that Lugar was very pleased with the nomination, "based on the limited experience the committee has had with McMahon." The spokesman said that Casey had several long talks with Lugar over the weekend and "the relationship with Casey is improving all the time."